

## Social Media Best Practices

1. **Make sure you are engaging on social media.** Your customers are active on social media and they expect companies to engage with them on social networks. The choice is how and where to engage.
2. **Understand your customers and where they spend time.** Best practices are still being established and metrics can be hard to come by. Start by understanding your target audience, what social media channels they use, on which device and how. Determine how your customers can benefit from social media.
3. **Use Social Media to increase the touchpoints that you have with your customers.** Offer both public and private ways to be part of the brand's community. Not everyone starts out a brand advocate, but many become brand advocates once they are aligned with your brand.
4. **Create value in social media.** Whether you use social media for communicating new product launches, beta testing, local promotions, coupons, breaking news, or just to talk to your VIP customers, there has to be a reason for them to follow (adopt) and continue to be vested (retention). Turn negative sentiments positive with good (and visible) customer service.
5. **Be social; don't just be "on" social.** Customers know the difference between customer centricity and 'marketing'. Getting '20,000 friends' on Facebook doesn't matter unless you passionately engage them. Human involvement is what gives brands their strongest competitive difference in social media today. Show your brand's human side.
6. **Align your marketing efforts.** Your strategies for social media should be done alongside what you are doing currently in lifecycle marketing. Social media is an extension of your existing marketing, but it's also an acquisition vehicle to acquire new users who discover you organically through social (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Pinterest, YouTube, etc.). You should still strive to be top-of-mind, engaging and eventually turn consumers into brand advocates.
7. **Don't oversell in social media.** Sending too many 'salesy' messages will turn-off your customers from engaging. Try to have 5 or more helpful interactions to 1 sales pitch. Don't sell products, sell your brand message and communicate your message at the right time in the customer journey.
8. **Monitor what is being said about your brand.** Continually monitor and set up alerts for when your brand is mentioned to help you understand issues that need to be resolved, understand what is working well, how you are perceived by customers, etc.
9. **Engage directly with your active fans and followers.** Pinpoint your brand's most active fans and brand advocates, and make sure to include them in the discussion. Letting your biggest fans know that you're listening builds stronger emotional ties and can further their efforts as brand advocates. A simple retweet can go a long way.
10. **The conversation is happening with or without you.** Customers expect companies to engage with them. With millions of Twitter updates and Instagram posts every hour, the conversation is happening. You can't beat them so you must join them.
11. **Leverage user-generated content (UGC) from social on your own channels.** Social media can be used to share your messages, but many retailers find that the more effective use of social media is to pull and feature user-generated content (especially photos) on their ecommerce site and marketing materials.
12. **Make sure you think of Social Media Optimization, SMO.** SMO can help drive SEO by having customers write content, reviews, tag products, etc. These all are benefits to SEO that come from Social Media.
13. **Listen and learn to see the 360 view of the customer.** By integrating social media with your CRM, you can use social interactions to learn about customers' needs and desires, and improve the relevancy of your emails and other communication.

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# eCommerce Diligence™ Checklist

## Social Media Key Questions to Ask Providers

### Company

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1. How long have you been in this business?
2. How many clients have you sold? How many have you lost, and why?
3. What type of clients fall into your “sweet spot”?
4. What peripheral or supporting services do you offer (e.g., content creation, graphic design, SEO/SEM, customization, integration with CRM/ESPs)?

### Products/Services

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1. What is the process to add features you currently don't have?
2. What redundancy and disaster recovery do you have in place?
3. How long to launch a basic campaign? A sophisticated one?
4. What type of training do you provide?
5. What skills does my organization (or hired third party) need to implement this platform?
6. What technical support services are available?
7. Are there human beings I can reach during reasonable hours (chat or phone) or do I have to wait 24 hours for an email response or callback?
8. Is your support team located in the US or abroad? What is your SLA for support issues?
9. Do you have a support knowledge base, community forum, or applications that are shared by customers?
10. What are the client support requirements?

### Features

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1. What key features are included in your solution? (Please indicate if they are B2B- or B2C-based.)
2. Are there key features or solutions you have that no one else has in the social media space?
3. What features are currently missing that many of your competitors have?
4. What features are on your roadmap?
5. What is your product's competitive advantage over other packages? Why? Price? Features? Ease of use? Flexibility? Don't say “all”.
6. Can I integrate my own eCommerce system with your Social Media solution(s)? How?
7. Please list the ecommerce solutions for which you have standard integrations already built.
8. Please list ones where you have built custom integrations.
9. Is your platform geared strictly to B2C sales or is there special B2B functionality available as well?
10. Describe the features that you consider B2B.
11. Do you have a management console? What can I manage with it? Is it web-based, application-based, other? Reporting and a dashboard?
12. Please describe your reporting capabilities?
13. Please provide a list of standard reports.
14. What analytics tools does your solution include?
15. Does it provide the ability to analyze cart abandonment, quantify browser searches, tie product purchases to search terms, etc.?
16. How does your platform address the evolving security standards? Has it been certified by independent third parties as PCI DSS compliant or do you just promise it is? In the future, free tools may not be capable of effectively keeping up with corporate content management or your employees' use of social media. How do you combat this?

### Pricing

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1. What are the pricing schedules and what features do they include? On what are they based? Provide an annual estimate of cost, based on some performance metrics.
2. What ROI can I expect from social media content and optimization?
3. How do you charge for annual service and support? What about maintenance?
4. Are there any additional fees (e.g., implementation, transaction costs, revenue sharing)?

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